

REMARKS

Claims 1-12 are pending in the above application; claims 2-9 have been withdrawn from consideration. By the above amendment, claims 10-12 have been added.

The Office Action dated June 30, 2006, has been received and carefully reviewed. In that Office Action, claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph as being indefinite and also under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by McClanahan. Each of these issues is addressed below.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. 112, SECOND PARAGRAPH

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, because it was unclear that an assembled structure was being claimed. By the above amendment, claim 1 has been revised to clarify that an assembled structure is claimed.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. 102(b)

Claim 1 is also rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by McClanahan. By the above amendment, claim 1 has been amended to clarify that the claimed one of a fixed projecting portion and a recessed portion of the shaft coupling portion position the shaft in an axial direction in both directions along the axis of the shaft. In McClanahan, projection 66 positions a shaft in only one direction relative to the yoke - movement of element 12 into the yoke is limited but movement in the direction out of the yoke is not limited. Because McClanahan does not show a yoke-and-shaft coupling structure as required by amended claim 1, claim 1 is submitted to be allowable over this reference.

New claim 10 is also submitted to be allowable over McClanahan. Claim 10 recites a shaft having a longitudinal axis that is insertable into a U-shaped end portion of a yoke in a direction perpendicular to the axis of the shaft. Claim 10 further defines a relationship between one of a fixed projecting portion and a recessed portion on a shaft coupling portion and one of a groove portion and a salient portion on the shaft. These elements are arranged such that the fixed projecting portion in the groove portion or the salient portion in the recessed portion limits relative axial movement between the yoke and all parts of the shaft in the U-shaped end portion

of the yoke. For purposes of argument only, Applicant will treat McClanahan's block 12 as part of McClanahan's shaft. However, even under this interpretation, projecting portion 68 of McClanahan's yoke interacts with groove portion 42 of block 12 but does not limit relative axial movement of all parts of the shaft in the U-shaped end portion of the yoke. The movement of rod 16 in the yoke, for example, is not limited by projection 68. Claim 10 is therefore submitted to be allowable over McClanahan even under the interpretation of "shaft" used in the Office Action.

New claim 11 is also submitted to be allowable over McClanahan. Claim 11 recites a yoke and shaft coupling structure that includes a shaft coupling portion which has a U-shaped end portion having a U-shaped end face and one of a fixed projecting portion and a recessed portion and a shaft having a longitudinal axis and one of a groove portion and a salient portion. A first part of the shaft is positioned in the shaft coupling portion and a second part of the shaft projects from the yoke through the U-shaped end face. When either the fixed projecting portion cooperates with the groove portion or the salient portion cooperates with the recessed portion, axial movement of the shaft into the yoke is limited and the shaft is prevented from being axially removed from the yoke. McClanahan's projecting portion 68 does not prevent the shaft from being axially removed from the yoke, it merely limits movement of block 12 in a direction into the yoke. For at least this reason, claim 11 is submitted to be allowable over McClanahan.

Claim 12 depends from claim 11 and is submitted to be allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 11.

CONCLUSION

Each issue raised in the Office Action dated June 30, 2006, has been addressed, and it is believed that claims 1 and 10-12 are in condition for allowance. Wherefore, reconsideration and allowance of claim 1 and examination and allowance of claims 10-12 is earnestly solicited.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the examiner is respectfully requested to contact Scott Wakeman (Reg. No. 37,750) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

Application No. 10/695,742
Amendment dated October 2, 2006
Reply to Office Action of June 30, 2006

Docket No.: 1560-0400P

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.14; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 

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